Centre for Learning and Teaching

focus

on university teaching and learning

Note From the Director

As we are challenged as educators to meet 21st century learners' needs and our society's expectations for graduates, partnering with others has become an invaluable approach—whether it is among teachers, across disciplines, or between academic and non-academic units within our institution. Increasingly, we can also see the benefits of collaborating across institutions. In this issue of *Focus*, faculty and staff share a range of approaches to cross-institutional educational partnerships within Nova Scotia that we hope will inspire the development of further supports, resources, and curriculum projects.

Suzanne Le-May Sheffield, Ph.D
Director,
Centre for Learning and Teaching

DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

Cross-institutional Initiatives

Betsy Keating,
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Centre for Learning and Teaching
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To understand the potential power of cross-institutional collaborations, we need only recall the origins of the internet in the late 1960s. Several versions of the internet's history exist; however, it is clear that the earliest iterations of networks and the internet depended on cross-institutional partnerships and collaborations formed around new technologies. For example, in 1965, over telephone lines, the first two computers were connected long-distance between MIT and a lab in Santa Monica, California. Not long afterwards, the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) started the first network, "ARPAnet," connecting four supercomputers at Stanford's Research Institute, the University of California's LA and Santa Barbara campuses, and the University of Utah (Curran, 2012, p. 36; Peter, 2004). Over the next two years, more institutions joined the ARPAnet, while other networks were created independently, one in Hawaii, another in Europe, and so forth (Peter, 2004). Within a few years, networks were connected to each other and connectivity became exponential. Behind each iteration was the work of researchers and academics who wanted to share information across institutional boundaries.

Engelbart and Lehtman (1988) were two of the many players involved in continuing refinements of the internet, specifically the human interface aspects. Almost three decades ago, in an article titled "Working Together," they warned us that the human factor in knowledge advancement is vital to progress and must not be ignored:

> The culture of science is committed to the public disclosure of research, collective dialogue and intellectual cooperation in order to further scientific advance. This cultural tradition gave rise to the cooperative development of networking protocols, and their open release. As a consequence, a tradition of openness and reciprocity became part of the founding tradition of the net. (Curran, 2012, p. 38)

The internet is one example of massive, multiple cross-collaborations between institutitons, research units, and industry. However, any innovation begins with someone, somewhere, having a great idea and connecting with others to make it happen. Cross-institutional collaborations may be as simple as a conversation between colleagues working out a knotty problem or as complex as the creation of the internet. Regardless of the size, endeavours that involve more than one institution generally become greater than the parts. While the internet may have come together through research oriented processes, the advent of the internet has had immense implications for teaching and learning. The articles in this issue of *Focus* highlight a handful of the many cross-institutional initiatives currently taking place between Dalhousie and partner universities that already have or soon will affect teaching and learning in the region.

Instructional Skills Workshops (ISW) are relatively new to Eastern Canada, although they have been established further west for many years (Morrison, 1985). ISW facilitators, Chad O'Brien and William Kay, had a chance meeting and a "small world" coincidence that led to a partnership. Now, they are working towards making ISWs more broadly accessible across institutions in the region. Read about their project in the first article, "Instructional skills workshop initiative in the Halifax area."

Sometimes innovations begin with academics who, dreaming large, are willing to invest their time securing both grants and partnerships to see their endeavours take off. Dalhousie's Indigenous Studies Minor was such an initiative, and it is growing rapidly. In the second article, Diana Lewis describes the programming and collaborations that allow students from several Institutions to receive credit for courses in the program.

In the third article, Brenda Sabo offers a behind-the-scenes look at a shared response to the needs of a profession, describing how a group of deeply invested stakeholders set out to modify the Nursing curriculum for Dalhousie and other area institutions—while retaining the unique features of each program.

Finally, building a community of practice takes some heavy-lifting. Join Matthew Schnurr and Anna MacLeod as they share the story of bringing together an interdisciplinary community around simulations-based learning. After a successful symposium, they and their colleagues are now designing an open resource "hub," hosted by the Centre for Learning and Teaching, for sharing resources and making connections across area institutions.

In this issue of *Focus*, we are celebrating the human factor involved in bringing about cross-institutional collaborations, not for the sake of innovation itself, but to benefit the students of our many institutions by working towards excellence in teaching and learning.

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Faculty Certificate in Teaching and Learning

The Faculty Certificate in Teaching and Learning is a non-credit program offered through the Centre for Learning and Teaching (CLT) that is FREE to Dalhousie faculty members including limited term contract faculty, part-time academics, and post-doctoral fellows, as well as staff members who teach or have an interest in university teaching.

CERTIFICATE PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Completion of all four Program Components is necessary to obtain the Faculty Certificate. The Certificate may be completed within one year, or participants may wish to take up to three years to complete the requirements.

1. Core Course

The core course, **Learning Focused Course Design**, is offered in the winter semester, with 6 classes and 6 Instructor-supported labs on alternating weeks. Classes and Labs will meet on Tuesdays from 4:00 to 7:00 PM.

Participants will have the opportunity to design, or re-design, a course. We will focus on creating alignment between course learning outcomes, teaching methods and activities, and student assessments.

2. Peer Observations

Certificate participants engage in **three teaching observations** by peers/colleagues. Observers are provided with guidance and a template for offering formative feedback; observations are confidential and non-evaluative. Formative feedback from peer observations allows participants to critically assess and reflect on their teaching practice.

3. Studio Courses

Certificate participants complete a minimum of **two Studio Courses**. A variety of Studio Courses are offered throughout the year by the CLT.

4. Teaching Dossier

Certificate participants must attend the **Two-part Workshop Series: Creating a Teaching Dossier**, offered each May, and create (or revise) a teaching dossier following guidelines offered in the workshop.
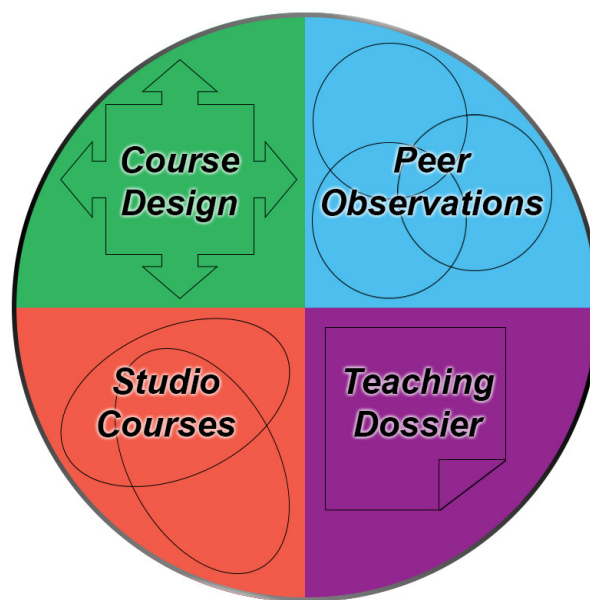
For more information on the Program and how to register, contact us at:

Centre for Learning and Teaching

Dalhousie University

Killam Memorial Library, Suite G90

clt@dal.ca | (902) 494-1622 | www.dal.ca/dept/clt/services/FCTL.html

The Certificate is offered in partnership with Executive Education in the Faculty of Management. However, the CLT is responsible for all admission, administration, delivery, and completion processes.

Instructional Skills Workshop Initiative in the Halifax Area

Chad O'Brien, Centre for Learning and Teaching, Dalhousie University

William Kay, Studio for Teaching and Learning, Saint Mary's University

A cross-institutional Instructional Skills Workshop (ISW) Program was launched this past spring, a partnership between Dalhousie University and Saint Mary's University (SMU). This inaugural program had participants representing SMU, Dalhousie University, Mount Saint Vincent University, the Nova Scotia Community College, and the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. We co-facilitated an experiential and intensive four day program about learning-centred teaching, with the intent to build a regional community around teaching excellence, educational leadership, and the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL). (For more information on the ISW workshop and network see: https://iswnetwork.ca/.)

The ISW Program was originally developed during the late-1970s in British Columbia in response to a call for additional instructional skill mentorship in the early-career development of instructors (Day, 2004, p. 2). Since then, the positive impact of the ISWs has been equally influential on the teaching practice of more experienced educators in higher education across Canada and internationally (Dawson, et al., 2014; Macpherson, 2011). For example, in 2014, the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario published the largest research project to date on the impact of ISWs across four different higher education institutions in Ontario. The results showed that ISW participants became more student focused, reflective in their practice, and attentive to developing their teaching practice after participating in an ISW (Dawson, et al., 2014).

ISWs use an intensive experiential learning approach that provides participants with frameworks for teaching in higher education, writing learning objectives, and preparing lessons. The structure of the workshop encourages reflection and feedback on mini-lessons that are performed by the participants. Although ISWs are a highly structured and intensive program focused on refining teaching practices, the real value is the opportunity for both new and experienced educators to share their own thoughts, feelings, and experiences about teaching in a retreat-like setting. It is often the informal discussions that take place between the learning modules and the mini-lessons that lead to inspired ideas and lasting relationships that extend far beyond the four-day program. That was indeed the case for us. We were trained to be ISW facilitators during our time at different Canadian-based university campuses in Doha, Qatar. Interestingly, although we each had experience in facilitating ISWs in that region, we did not meet until 2016 when the first Regional Developers Meeting was hosted at Dalhousie. That initial meeting led to a conversation around shared perspectives on the ISW's positive impact on teaching excellence. From that conversation, we formed and implemented a plan to begin ISW training across higher education institutions in Nova Scotia.

This fall, our pilot ISW involved experienced educators who were serving as educational developers and instructional designers in their respective institutions in the Halifax area. The intent was to provide influential delegates from regional learning centres with the ISW experience, to see if they found the intensive workshop beneficial to their respective institutions.

Feedback from the workshop participants affirmed that ISWs have the potential to positively impact teaching excellence in our region:

> *"I really hope we can build on this and have the ISW [as] a permanent feature at teaching centres in the region."*

> *"I think it would be great to build an ISW program locally."*

> *"I think the ISW workshop would work well at [our institution] as a new faculty development piece."*

> *"I think that [our institution] would be interested in discussing ISW offerings."*

ISWs are structured to ensure that participants experience high impact learning. As such, it is not typically offered to more than five participants per facilitator during a session. We have explored some interesting models with the potential to scale and blend the workshop format, in order to expand the offerings and make them flexible and accessible to more participants, while maintaining the program's ethos. We offered a presentation on this ISW work at the Association of Atlantic Universities Showcase that took place at Mount Saint Vincent University in October.

Since then, we have reached out and networked with leading ISW trainers to develop some cost-effective program options to train educational developers from across the region to become ISW faciliators. A local group of ISW facilitators from several different institutions would have a high impact on professional development for higher education instruction in the Halifax region and beyond. By expanding the network of facilitators and the number of offerings, we intend to help all higher education institutions in Nova Scotia develop the capacity to offer ISWs on their own terms.

We have had a lot of interest from local faculty members, as well as from faculty in neighbouring provinces. Exciting plans to deliver and develop this program are in the works for 2018. If you have any questions, or are interested in knowing more about this cross-institutional project, do feel free to contact us.

William Kay is an Educational Developer at SMU (William.Kay@smu.ca)

Chad O'Brien is an Instructional Designer at Dalhousie (chad.obrien@dal.ca)

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Atlantic Universities' Teaching Showcase 2018

Saturday, October 20, 2018
Dalhousie University, Agricultural Campus
Truro, Nova Scotia

Look for the call for papers in the Spring of 2018

ASSOCIATION OF ATLANTIC UNIVERSITIES

ASSOCIATION DES UNIVERSITÉS DE L'ATLANTIQUE

DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY 1818 2018

Meet this Year's Dalhousie Teaching Award Winners

Originally Published in *DalNews,* Ryan McNutt and Matt Reeder - June 15, 2017

Nearly all of us have some point in our life at which our path forward has been shaped by an inspiring teacher.

Each year, Dalhousie celebrates just some of those amazing teachers — be they faculty members, lecturers, grad students and others — with its suite of University-Wide Teaching Awards.

In addition to the Alumni Association Award of Excellence for Teaching (Dal's top teaching award), there are particular awards to celebrate graduate supervision, diversity in education, academic innovation, early-career excellence and more. The nomination process, managed by the Centre for Learning and Teaching, seeks candidates from across the university, with winners chosen by various selection committees.

Look for more detailed coverage on some of these winners on Dal News this fall, when the honourees will be receiving their awards.

Alumni Association Award of Excellence for Teaching
Vivian Howard (School of Information Management)

Vivian Howard, this year's recipient of the university's top teaching award, first joined Dal in a full-time role in 1999 as one of the original instructors in the then newly launched Bachelor of Management program. Since then, she has built a reputation as an outstanding teacher and community leader. An associate professor in the School of Information Management, Dr. Howard is being recognized for her scholarly contributions on teaching and learning and for her commitment to community engagement and helping boost retention efforts for international students. She has also provided consistent support for peers across faculties on major initiatives such as the development of the Indigenous Studies minor, which launched in the fall of 2015.

Academic Innovation Award
Diane MacKenzie (School of Occupational Therapy)

Diane MacKenzie, an assistant professor who has taught in the School of Occupational Therapy since 2000, led the development of a mandatory interprofessional health simulation used within the Faculty of Health Professions and the Faculty of Medicine. That simulation, which included video scenarios, questions, debriefing sessions and extensive evaluations, has won praise from faculty and students alike for its effectiveness in preparing future health professionals to face some of the challenges of collaborative clinical practice (conflict resolution, etc). Said one nominator of Dr. MacKenzie's simulation: "It clearly demonstrates the art of what is possible and places Dalhousie as a national leader in interprofessional education."

## Award for Excellence in Education for Diversity
Lisa Goldberg (School of Nursing)

Lisa Goldberg, an associate professor in the School of Nursing, is receiving Dal's award for education for diversity. In particular, Dr. Goldberg is being celebrated for her work enhancing Dal's Nursing curriculum by applying the "Caring Science" approach to teaching and mentorship. These changes provide more opportunities for students to have exposure to important considerations in the health-care system, like the needs of LGBTQ+ individuals. Wrote one nominator: "She creates a safe space for students to discuss issues of heteronormativity, sexism, racism, ableism, etc. Within this space of diversity dialogue, she is able to address issues of socially constructed marginalization so that students can continue their own journey of present and life-long learning about diversity."

Early Career Faculty Award of Excellence in Teaching
Mike Smit (School of Information Management)
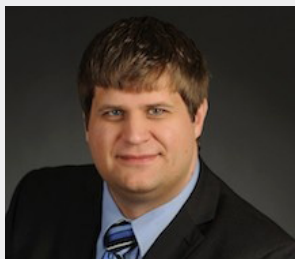
An associate professor in the School of Information Management, Mike Smit is this year's recipient of Dal's award celebrating exceptional teaching and educational leadership at the onset of one's career. A two-time Dal alumnus (both a bachelor's and master's degree in Computer Science), Dr. Smit was cited by the selection committee for his strong commitment to students, the high standards he sets for learning, and his concern for individual student success. The selection committee writes that the praise and thanks Dr. Smit has received from his students, "speaks to the impact [his] instruction has had on their education."

Award for Excellence in Graduate Supervision
Sherry Stewart (Department of Psychiatry)

Sherry Stewart, professor in the Department of Psychiatry with cross-appointments in Psychology & Neuroscience and Community Health & Epidemiology, is being celebrated for her sustained and energetic commitment to graduate supervision. A faculty member at Dalhousie for nearly 25 years, Dr. Stewart takes to her role as mentor and role model to her students with great pride; more than one letter of support in her nomination package used the phrase "best supervisor ever." Her students told the selection committee that she makes research fun, is always approachable and giving of her time, and showcases a great love and enthusiasm for her work.

Contract and Limited-Term Faculty Award for Excellence in Teaching
Jennifer Grek Martin (School of Information Management)

A lecturer in the School of Information Management, Jennifer Grek Martin is receiving Dal's award celebrating teaching from contract and limited-term faculty. The selection committee was impressed by Dr. Martin's breadth of teaching experience with positive student and peer feedback, as well as her commitment with curriculum design and creative learning. "In a short period of time," the committee writes, "[Grek Martin has] built an outstanding portfolio and has demonstrated evidence of leadership beyond the expectations of contract and limited-term faculty."

President's Graduate Student Teaching Award
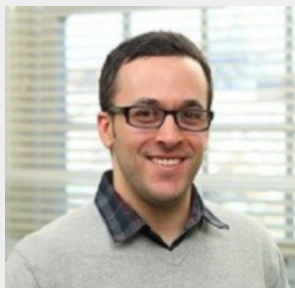
**David Beitelman
(Department of Political Science)**

**Sarah Greening
(Department of Chemistry)**

PhD candidates David Beitelman and Sarah Greening are each receiving the university's award for graduate student teaching. Beitelman, from the Department of Political Science, impressed the selection committee with how his students have benefitted from his unique ideas, entertaining professional lectures, pedagogical innovation and great efforts to support students expressing their individual views. Greening, from the Department of Chemistry, was cited for her innovative lab teaching efforts for students of diverse backgrounds, as well as her exemplary leadership and role as a volunteer in the community.

Indigenous Studies Programs: An interview with Diana Lewis

Diana Lewis, PhD(c), Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, Dalhousie University

In a recent interview, Diana Lewis, Indigenous Studies Program Coordinator, told us that Dalhousie has been building capacity and experience for teaching and learning in Indigenous Studies by planning and offering more courses. Student interest and demand for these programs has grown, and the increased enrollment speaks to Dalhousie's commitment to Indigenous programming. By the end of the third year of the relatively new Minor in Indigenous Studies, over 500 students will have been enrolled in the many course offerings. Lewis credits Dalhousie's investment in full-time faculty members with the Program's growth and stability. Many faculty are Mi'kmaw and come with a wealth of experience working and partnering in research with Indigenous communities, both in Canada and internationally. Lewis says she knows of ten Indigenous faculty members, in various programs across the University, who teach courses that count towards the Minor. Several other faculty members, in various departments, also teach courses that count towards the Minor.

The Minor in Indigenous Studies, open to Dalhousie students in the Faculties of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS), Management, Science, and Medicine, requires six credit hours of core courses and 12 credit hours from an approved list of courses. The Program began with a small funding proposal and an interdisciplinary and cross-cultural development committee in 2013. You can read about its origins in this Blog post by Vivian Howard (Associate Dean Academic, Faculty of Management), who together with Patricia Doyle-Bedwell, initiated the proposal and received Academic Innovation funding for the Minor: https://blogs.dal.ca/ideabank/2014/09/03/developing-the-indigenous-studies-minor.

The Program launched at Dalhousie on a small scale in 2015/16 with just two half-courses. Now, eight courses are offered through Indigenous Studies, and ten additional courses from multiple departments have been approved as part of the Indigenous Studies curriculum. Enrollment has increased each year, from 108 students in the first year to 252 students in the 2017/18 academic year.

The courses are available to students from Mount Saint Vincent University, Saint Mary's University, and NSCAD University. These students may take courses at Dalhousie's Halifax campuses and receive credit towards a Minor at their home institutions. A wide range of courses include topics such as: historical or contemporary issues in Indigenous Studies, research methods, health and healing, and Indigenous governance. Gender and Women's Studies, Health, History, Political Science, Public Administration, Music, Nursing, and Sociology and Social Anthropology, among others, all have courses in place or in development for the program.

Students from Dalhousie can take courses from some of the other institutions as well. For example, the Indigenous Studies Minor program recently partnered with Cape Breton University (CBU) for a new online course in conversational Mi'kmaq https://www.cbu.ca/indigenous-affairs/unamaki-college/kji-keptin-alexander-denny-lnuisultimkeweyokuom/mikmaq-language-teaching. An instructor from Membertou First Nation uses the CBU video-conferencing equipment, and Dalhousie students and staff members can participate from a video-conference equipped classroom with a facilitator here in Halifax. Lewis told us, "it didn't make sense to duplicate the course and the use of resources when someone already had the expertise." She gives Dr. Krista Kesselring, who was the Associate Dean Academic for FASS at the time (2013-2017), credit for the heavy-lifting to get the cross-institutional agreements in place.

For those who have interest in this field of study, but do not need the Minor, Dalhousie also offers a Certificate Program in Indigenous Studies comprised of three courses. The learning outcomes for the Program are:

- Students will become familiar with Indigenous perspectives on historical and contemporary political, social, and economic issues.

- Students will learn about the history of the Indian Residential School system and the implications of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action.
- Students will become familiar with (and be given the opportunity to deepen through an elective option) Indigenous models of research.
- Students will attain basic competencies around the protocols of working with Indigenous groups or in Indigenous communities.

There are still relatively few students from institutions beyond Dalhousie enrolling here by letters of permission. However, Lewis told us that she and Assistant Professor Dr. Margaret Robinson, who are heading up the Program this year, hope that word will spread. Lewis told us that students spread the word through a strong Indigenous student union, and there are close ties between Dalhousie staff and faculty members associated with the program and the wider community—meaning that word-of-mouth has impact, and their hopes are not unfounded.

In addition to the Indigenous Studies Minor and Certificate, Lewis mentioned that Dalhousie's Indigenous Elders Program is "in demand across the region." The Elders represent the Mi'kmaw, Nakawe, Anishinaabeq, and Métis Nations. The program was designed to provide support to students enrolled in the Indigenous Studies Program and has grown to provide all Dalhousie students with access to Elders for guidance, counsel, and support. Beyond their engagements at Dalhousie, the Elders frequently make visits to community gatherings, businesses, industry, conferences/conventions, and government events. The Elders-in-Residence Program has been accessed by Mount Saint Vincent University, Nova Scotia Community College, NSCAD University, and the University of King's College https://www.dal.ca/academics/programs/undergraduate/indigenous-studies/a-day-in-the-life/elders-in-residence.html.

Diana Lewis, PhD(c) is a Lecturer in the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, and she Coordinates the Indigenous Studies Program.

What's on the Horizon?
Cross Institutional Collaboration around Technology Enabled Learning

On November 9, Provincial partners and stakeholders hosted a full-day event to celebrate collaboration between post-secondary institutions across Nova Scotia. In a singularly difficult feat of high-tech collaboration and engineering, participants and presenters attended the event remotely from locations at Acadia University, Cape Breton University, Dalhousie University, NSCC (Truro), Université Sainte-Anne and St. FX University. The event brought together several communities of interest, including those involved in teaching and learning, research, and institutional leadership.

The day-long event showcased innovative practices in technology enabled learning (TEL) from nine institutions across Nova Scotia, including recent projects delivered through Higher-Ed IT Shared Services. Attendees were apprised of a recent faculty feasibility study, and the current findings from discussions with faculty members at all post-secondary institutions across the province. One focus of the event was to raise cross-institutional and provincial awareness of the innovations occurring in Technology Enabled Learning and the national digital research infrastructure. The event fostered interest in continued province-wide collaboration in the area of technology enabled learning and ignited curiosity in sustaining a cross-institutional community of practice.

Chad O'Brien, Project Manager, Technology Enabled Learning

Nursing Curriculum for the 21ˢᵗ Century: Revisited, Revised, and Rejuvenated

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

-Nelson Mandela

Brenda Sabo, RN, PhD
School of Nursing,
Dalhousie University

In 2015, the final report of the Registered Nurses Education Review in Nova Scotia (Cruickshank & Ells, 2015) was released, outlining changes required to strengthen and modernize the quality, accountability, and sustainability of Nova Scotia's undergraduate nursing education. With rapidly changing technology and a healthcare system facing significant resource cuts, the stage was set to examine how best to deliver nursing education, while meeting the demands and expectations of Nova Scotia's citizens and a new generation of learners. Maintaining the status quo would no longer suffice; change was needed to revitalize and rejuvenate nursing education. Thus began a unique and innovative approach to curriculum revision across the three universities—Dalhousie, Cape Breton (CBU), and Saint Frances Xavier (StFX). Although collaborative, there was also a desire to retain unique contextual elements at individual universities. In any collaborative project, negotiation and accommodation are critical not only to advance change, but to ensure that each School is able to retain their unique identities.

The three universities were asked to look at how best to offer a "rich mix of shared/common services, resources and talents to students" (Cruickshank & Ells, 2015, p. VI), address transition to practice concerns voiced by service sector partners, ensure graduates had the necessary requisite knowledge and skills as generalists with shortened transition time to specialty practice, increase on-line learning that could be collaboratively provided and accessed by all provincial nursing students, and decrease course redundancy to improve efficiency and effectiveness through shared purchasing and deployment of human and other resources (Cruickshank & Ells, 2015, p. VI). Regular provincial Schools of Nursing meetings were held to explore how and in what way these changes would impact curriculum, not only within individual schools but also across all three programs. The Directors from each of the three schools (Dr. Kathleen MacMillan, Dalhousie; Ms. Willena Nemeth, CBU; Dr. Joanne Witty-Rogers, StFX) as well as Associate Directors/Chairs (Dr. Brenda Sabo, Dr. Joanne MacDonald) and curriculum lead (Dr. Shelley Cobbett, Dalhousie) worked to ensure that the necessary changes were reflective of not only healthcare system and health professional needs, but of people-centred approaches. Numerous meetings over the course of two years were necessary to iron-out what was necessary to support a new curriculum. Furthermore, changes to the curriculum involved input from multiple stakeholders and sources including, but not limited to, student evaluation data, current students and Registered Nurses (RN), patients and families, faculty, experts in curriculum review and revisions, and a Think Tank held at Dalhousie with representation from education, service and policy (van Soeren & Cobbett, 2016). The final outcome was a curriculum framework that would facilitate Dalhousie School of Nursing graduates' ability to move "into areas of uncertainty and unmet need in health care through education focusing on *Health and Social Care, Professional Transformation*, and *People-centredness* (van Soeren & Cobbett, 2016, pp. 21-22). A visual depiction of the framework illustrated in Figure 1 (p. 11) reflects a truly unique Maritime conceptualization of our nursing curriculum at Dalhousie. These three core themes serve to anchor the curriculum, ensuring learning is not only contextually situated at the individual and population health based levels, but that it influences transformational change within learners as they progress towards graduation and careers as RNs.
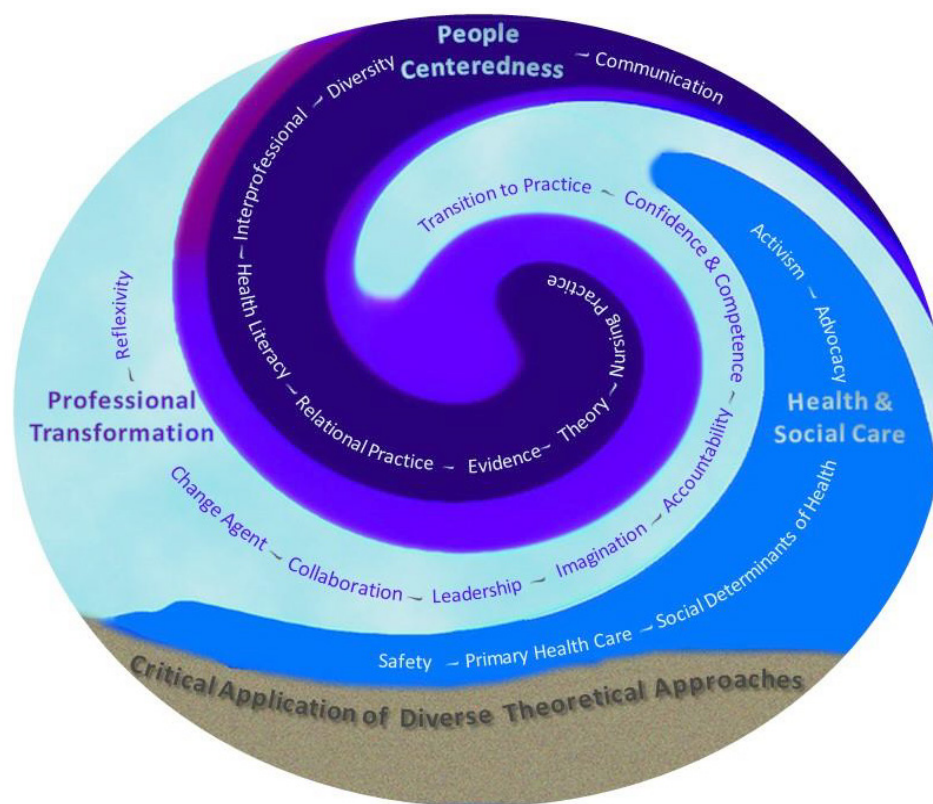
Figure 1. A Framework for the Nursing Curriculum. ©Dalhousie University School of Nursing (van Soeren & Cobbett, 2016, p. 22)

Traditionally, nursing curriculum has been grounded in one or more theoretical nursing approaches. Rather than continue with this practice, the new curriculum shifted thinking by embedding our pedagogical approach in the work of educational theorists, Gardner (2008) and Fink (2013). This is a novel approach to learning and better prepares the next generation of nurses to work within a rapidly evolving health care system. Curriculum is vertically and horizontally integrated within and across semesters to facilitate knowledge acquisition, application, and higher order thinking. Courses are no longer discrete, something to get through then close the book on, as the learner moves forward in the program. Rather, courses are connected, serving as building blocks reflective of Fink's integrative significant learning model which includes foundational knowledge, application, integration, human dimension, caring, and learning how to learn (Fink, 2013). Gardner's (2008) *Five Minds* aligns well with an integrative learning approach by supporting transformation within learners. Faculty support this transformation through the development and implementation of curricula that capture: *disciplined* and *synthesized* minds through objective formative and summative assessments that are relevant, leveled, and appropriate; *ethical* and *respectful* minds through the embedding of core nursing values, standards and competencies, ethical comportment and moral conduct, as well as inter-professional collaboration that models healthcare delivery reform; and *creative* minds to challenge the status quo, opening up new ideas to support change, address healthcare challenges, and support their development as the next generation of transformational leaders of change (Gardner, 2008). An example of pushing the boundaries through this unique approach to nursing education can be seen in Figure 2 (p. 12). Students engaged in the creation of masks at the start of the term, where the exterior of their creations was what they currently perceived about nursing; while the interior showed the shift in thinking that had begun to take place, but yet to manifest itself outwardly (part of professional formation).

Courses are team-taught, providing students with multiple perspectives on core themes within courses. Team teaching is a novel approach within nursing that challenges faculty to think differently about how they deliver content, pushing the boundaries of traditional educational models and necessitating that faculty move outside their comfort zones. Early feedback suggests that students enjoy having multiple educators in the classroom leading to greater engagement, lively discussion, and enhanced learning by both students and faculty. Working closely with the Centre for Learning and Teaching has become an integral part of facilitating pedagogical change and supporting faculty as educators as they transition to team teaching models.

Another example of collaborative team teaching which responds to the need to reduce redundancy, address resource related concerns, and identify critical gaps in specialty practice areas, is the partnership among the three universities across Nova Scotia. This innovative and creative solution was set up to prepare graduates for entry into specialty areas such as emergency and

Figure 2. The Use of Art in Exploring Understanding of Nursing: Nursing 2710 - Population Health Nursing

critical care, mental health/addictions, public health, gerontology, oncology, and rural/remote nursing involves dynamic. Interactive on-line theory-based course delivery with clinical/community-based experiential learning links students from the three universities to optimize learning. Learners will be able to register at their home university with fees remaining at the student's home institution, regardless of which university houses the nursing elective. Furthermore, this unique partnership facilitates faculty from the three universities to co-develop, implement, and evaluate the course, while simultaneously supporting the generation of innovative ideas, resolving access to specialty practice and content expertise related limitations, and enhancing faculty satisfaction.

One approach to enhancing experiential learning is through the integration of simulation. Currently, the School of Nursing's new curriculum is comprised of approximately 18% simulation ranging from low to high fidelity, the latter involving computerized anatomically correct manikins with programmable physiological responses to nursing interventions, as well as Digital Clinical Environments.

Simulation affords the learner an opportunity to test out decision-making, prioritization, and application of knowledge in a safe environment that replicates complex patient scenarios or clinical situations prior to encountering them in the real clinical environment (Ganley & Linnard-Palmer, 2012). An example of integrating "real life" into education is through the United Way's simulation, *Living on the Edge,* which is intended to build empathy for people who live in poverty. During the three-hour simulation, students

participate in real life scenarios of various families who live in poverty and have to manage day-to-day tasks including paying bills, getting groceries, taking care of children, and looking for employment. During the de-briefing, students shared how much they appreciated the simulation, as it gave them a glimpse into the realities of people who are living on the edge, and how their situations are a reflection of the social determinants of health. Furthermore, it challenged the way students perceive this reality through preconceived notions, attitudes, values, and beliefs. A recent study by Woda, Hansen, Paquette, & Topp (2017) suggests that the sequencing of simulation learning experiences, with simulation occurring prior to clinical, may be beneficial in enhancing clinical decision-making, self-confidence, and reducing anxiety-related decision-making. Simulation does appear to enhance optimal learning and clinical performance (Jeppesen, Christiansen, & Frederiksen, 2017; Woda, Gruenke, Alt-Gehrman, & Hansen, 2016; Woda, Hansen, Paquette, & Topp, 2017). However, more research is needed to determine the most effective sequencing of simulation and clinical practice in nursing education.

Evaluation of the implementation of the new curriculum and its ability to address key concerns identified in the RN Nursing Education Review is ongoing. Preliminary evaluations suggest greater student engagement, improved faculty collaboration in course development and team teaching, and an optimal learning environment. National interest in our curriculum has resulted in opportunities to profile the program through peer-reviewed publications, as well

as invitations to provide keynote addresses on nursing curriculum reform at national and international conferences.

Stay tuned as Year Two unfolds!

Dr. Brenda Sabo, RN, PhD. is a recipient of Dalhousie's Academic Innovation Award. She is an Associate Professor in both the School of Nursing, and the Division of Palliative Care in the Faculty of Medicine. Dr. Sabo is also a Senior Scientist with the Beatrice Hunter Cancer Research Institute.

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Teaching and Learning Grants

Change One Thing Challenge
Deadline to apply is Monday, February 5, 2018

Focus of Grant
The Change One Thing Challenge is an open invitation to the university teaching community to submit a description of a student engagement activity that has been developed as part of their current teaching practice, and that they believe has a positive impact on student learning.

Benefits for the Recipient
One recipient, as determined by a review panel, will receive a Change One Thing Challenge Grant for up to $1000 to support travel to a teaching and learning conference.

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Grants
Deadline to apply is Monday, February 12, 2018

Focus of Grant
These grants will provide support for Dalhousie educators who are interested in developing a research project that studies, assesses, and/or evaluates the impact of a particular initiative on students' learning.

Eligibility
Full-time Dalhousie faculty. To ensure the long-term sustainability of the project, non-academic staff and part-time or sessional faculty members may be co-applicants but each project team must include at least one full-time faculty member. Limited-term faculty must have at least one year remaining in their contract term.

Amount of Award
Up to $3,000 may be awarded to each project.

For more information on the above grants, visit **www.learningandteaching.dal.ca** or contact:
Dr. Suzanne Le-May Sheffield, Director, Centre for Learning and Teaching
902-494-1984 | Suzanne.Sheffield@dal.ca

Simulations and Student Learning: Building an Interdisciplinary Community of Practice Cross Universities in Atlantic Canada

Dr. Matthew A. Schnurr
Department of International
Development Studies

Dr. Anna MacLeod
Director of Education Research,
Faculty of Medicine

How can simulation-based learning enhance student learning? Over the past two years, a group of Dalhousie faculty who utilize these experiential teaching techniques have created a community of practice to investigate this question. Recently, our collaboration has expanded beyond our singular institutional focus and reached out to those with similar interests at universities across Atlantic Canada. This commentary reflects on this journey and what we have learned through this process.

Our original collaboration at Dalhousie grew out of common interests. It was a slow build. Over the course of several years, a few of us came to learn of each other's use of similar techniques across different disciplinary contexts. Eventually, we were able to find a time to meet in person. We chatted over coffee, described our individual interventions, and shared preliminary reflections on how the implementation of such immersive exercises varied across different disciplines.

We agreed that we could learn from each other with respect to how pedagogical techniques are operationalized across distinct teaching contexts. We discovered similarities in approaches rooted in experimentation and engagement, a commitment to trying new things, and a willingness to fail. We also discovered differences in terms of available resources to support immersive teaching, in infrastructure, and in pedagogical design.

We were unsure about next steps. We knew we wanted to deepen and expand our conversation, but we struggled to find something tangible that could

anchor our nascent collaboration. Because our group consisted mainly of scholars, our collective inclination was towards a more academic intervention that would allow us to better conceptualize, structure, and deliver this pedagogical strategy. We decided to submit an application to the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada Connections Grant competition, which is designed to support activities related to knowledge mobilization and practitioner engagement.

Our grant was successful (hooray!). This allowed us to move forward with our goal of scaling up our collaboration beyond Dalhousie and build an extensive community of practice amongst faculty members and educational developers with shared interest and expertise in using simulation based-learning. We launched the new venture by convening a one-day, in-person symposium in June 2017, which was attended by more than one hundred participants representing thirteen different institutions across the Maritimes. Since then, we have focused our efforts on two concurrent outreach strategies. First, we're designing a website that will serve as an online hub for interested participants by producing resources such as how-to worksheets and annotated bibliographies that are intended to reduce the time and labour burden associated with developing and implementing such immersive activities. The goal is to create a shared repertoire of tools and expertise that will become the "go-to place" for those seeking support to create or refine their use of simulation-based learning strategies. Second, we have scheduled a "traveling road show" that consists of in-person visits to our four partner institutions (University of New Brunswick, University of Prince Edward Island, Cape Breton University, and Memorial University of Newfoundland), in order to facilitate multi-directional knowledge sharing around the enrichment and expansion of these pedagogical practices.

So, what have we learned thus far? First, the positive: diversifying the voices in a collaboration—both across disciplines and across institutions—adds significant value to these exchanges. Our strategy of prioritizing

a grant application was the right choice for us; scaling up from an internal collaboration to one that crosscuts various institutions is easier to do with money in hand. We have utilized grant funds to bring people together for the in-person symposium, to send our team members out as part of the traveling road show, and to put together an online hub that is both empirically rich and visually engaging. And we've been able to hire a talented research coordinator who has taken on the bulk of the heavy lifting associated with these tasks.

We've also encountered challenges. We've struggled with issues of governance; it is difficult to manage a collaboration that is both inclusive and efficient. We've gravitated towards a model where one individual steps up as the champion for that particular task, while others opt for a more deferential role. While the particular combination of expertise and personalities of the core team has synched extremely well, we have struggled to identify champions at partner institutions to serve as the corresponding point persons for future activities. Part of the challenge here stems from incongruences between institutions. Some of the units we have at Dalhousie do not have equivalents at other universities. In other cases, we've been challenged to overcome differing expectations between faculty members at one institution and educational developers or instructional designers at another.

Our advice for others contemplating similar proposals is to invest some time early on identifying common outputs—a more appropriate term here might be "currencies"—which are valued by all members of the collective. These serve to anchor the collaboration as it moves forward and ensure that its trajectory remains true to the personal and professional aspirations of core team members. Articulating a clear vision at the outset lets others know what you are all about, and what you are not about. Ensuring that cross-institutional collaborations stay true to the collective's stated aims will help to ensure that the process remains relevant and valuable for all.

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Dr. Anna MacLeod is an Associate Professor and Director of Education Research in the Faculty of Medicine at Dalhousie University.

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Call for Proposals

Exploring the Future(s) of Higher Education: Supporting Inclusive Teaching Excellence

- What are our visions for the future of higher education and how will we bring them to fruition?
- How do we prepare students for a future we cannot possibly fully envision?
- What is the role of our educational institutions in helping students to create the world they want to live in?

As a feature teaching and learning celebration during **Dalhousie's 200th Anniversary**, the Dalhousie Conference on University Teaching and Learning will encourage dialogue about where we've been, and where we're heading, in the higher education teaching and learning environment. What it means to know, to learn, and to teach has changed significantly over the last 20 years, yet some aspects of our collective and individual teaching and learning practices have not changed at all. And while there are many prognosticators about the future, some foretelling decline and others exploring exciting new frontiers, change is inevitable. Our choices about which pathways we will embrace is a crucial conversation for higher education.

Deadline for proposals is February 5, 2018

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